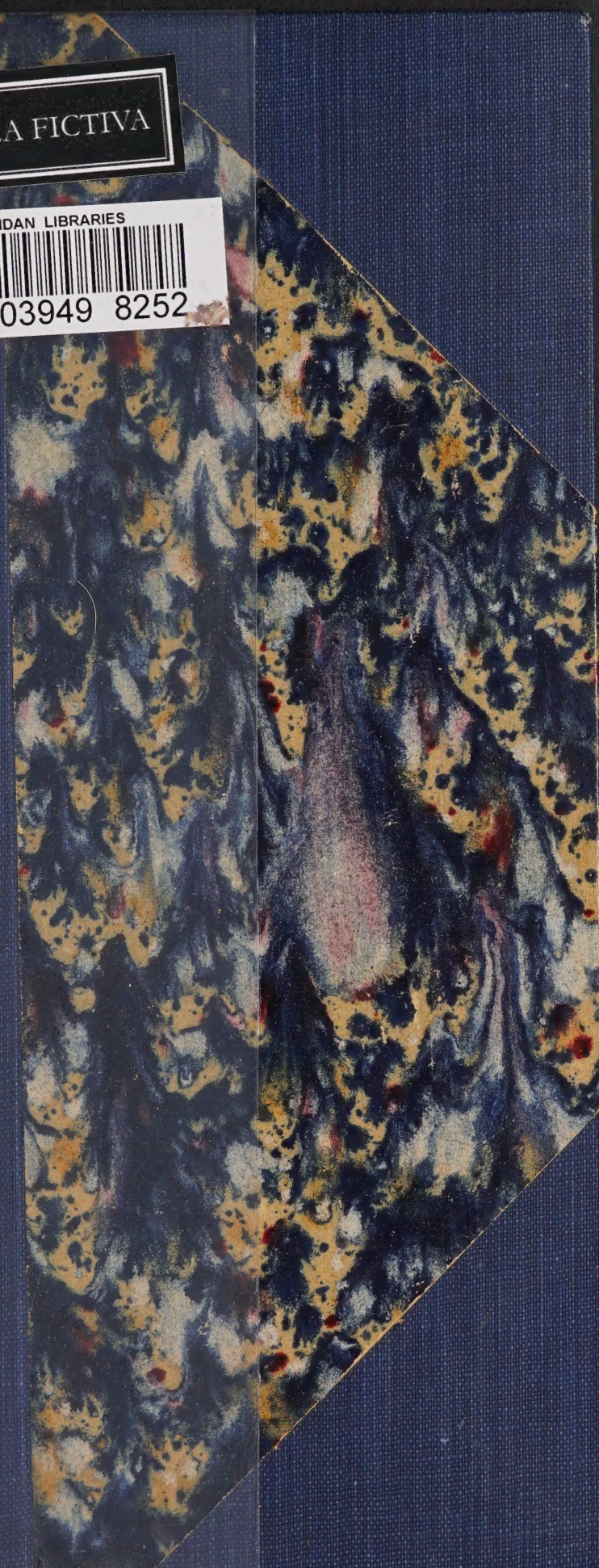


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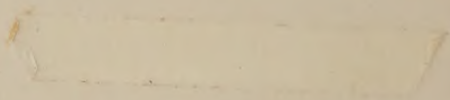


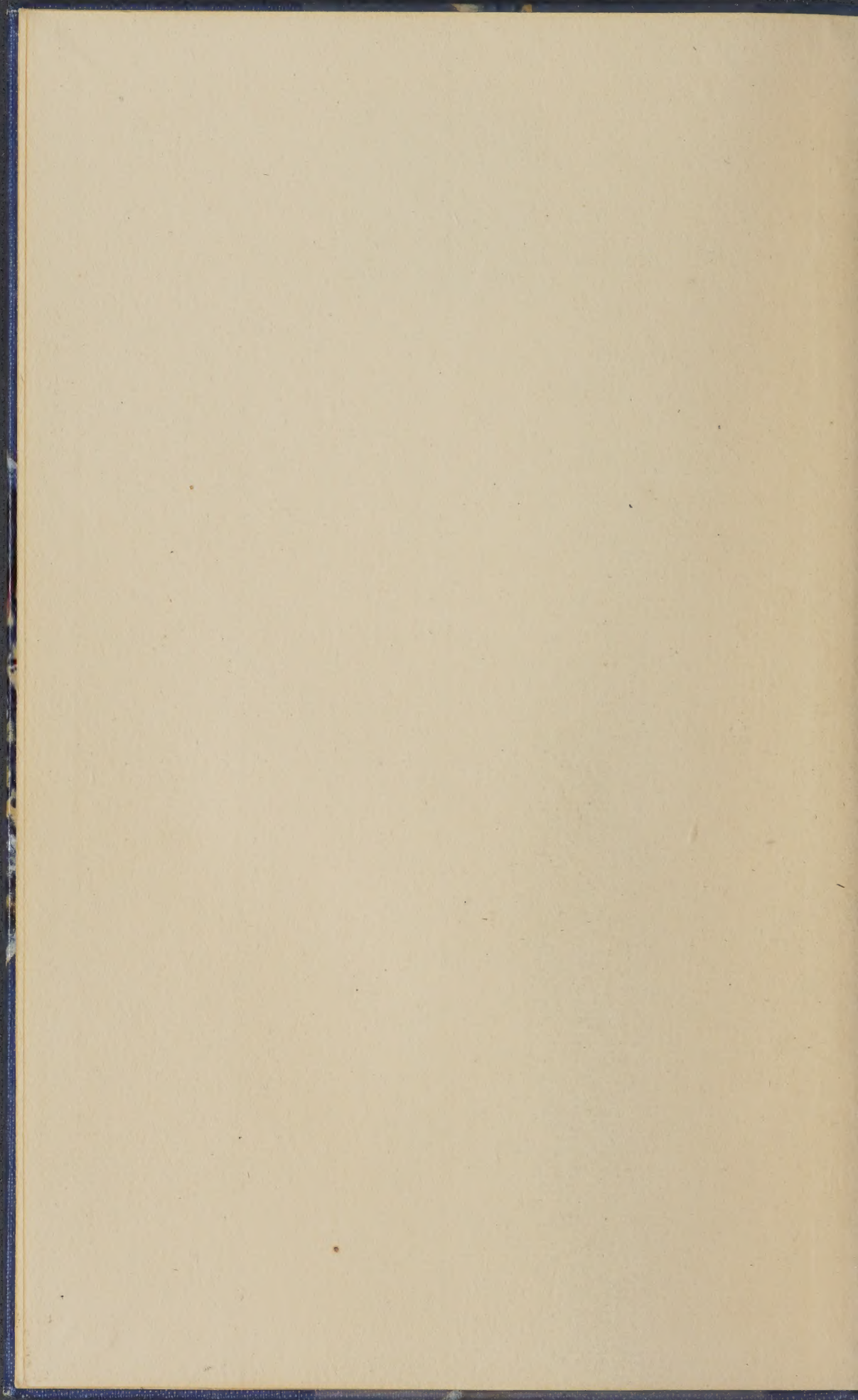
— ROBIN GOOD-FELLOW —

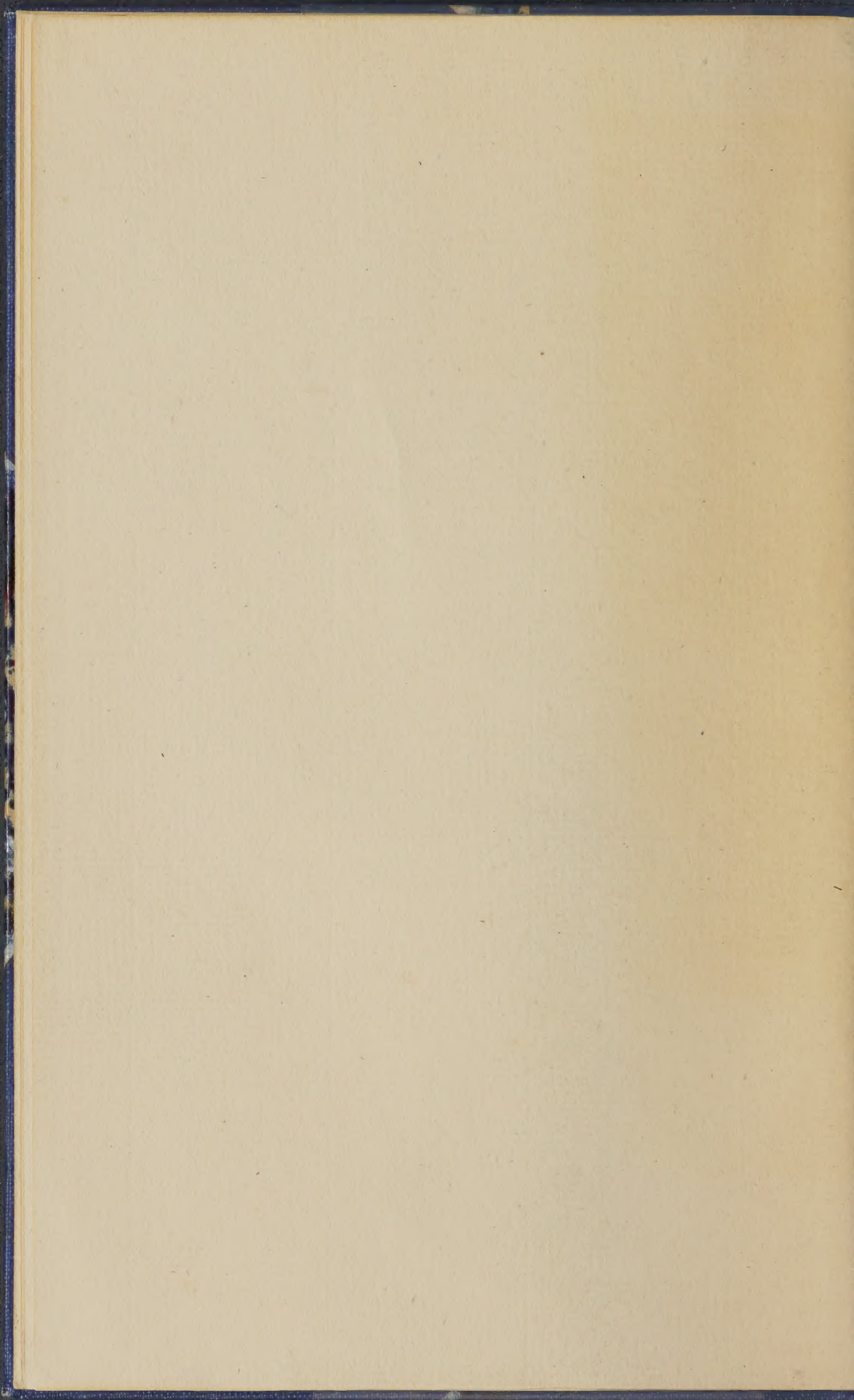












THE MERRY PUCK,
OR
ROBIN GOOD-FELLOW:

Describing his birth and whose sonne he was,
how he run away from his Mother, how he
was merry at the Bridehouse, how his
Father, King Oberon, found
him, together with
all his merry
Prankes.

Very pleasaunt and witty.

[REPRINTED
FROM A BLACK-LETTER COPY IN 8vo., PUBLISHED
SOON AFTER THE YEAR 1600.]

In Percy's "Reliques," Vol. III., is a ballad called "The Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow," probably not so old as the popular production here reprinted, which tallies with what is said of the "goblin" in Tarlton's "Newes out of Purgatory," first printed in 1589, again in 1590, 1608, and 1630. On this authority, and others, we know that he was "famosed in everie old wive's chronicle, for his mad merrie prankes." Shakespeare's Editors had not met with this ballad, which interestingly illustrates the Puck of "Midsummer Night's Dream."

Only twenty-five copies printed.

THE MERRY PRANKS OF ROBIN
GOOD-FELLOW: VERY PLEA-
SANT AND WITTY.

CHAPTER I.

Shewing his birth, and whose sonne he was.

HERE doe begin the merry iests
of Robin Good-fellow:
I'de wish you for to reade this booke,
if you his Pranks would know.
But first I will declare his birth,
and what his Mother was,
And then how Robin merrily
did bring his knacks to passe.

In time of old, when Fayries us'd
to wander in the night,

And

And through key-holes swiftly glide,
now marke my story right,
Among these pretty fairy Elves
was Oberon, their King,
Who us'd to keepe them company
still at their revelling.

And sundry houses they did use,
but one, above the rest,
Wherein a comely Lasse did dwell
that pleas'd King Oberon best.
This lovely Damsell, neat and faire,
so courteous, meek, and mild,
As sayes my booke, by Oberon
she was begot with child.

She knew not who the Father was ;
but thus to all would say —
In night time he to her still came,
and went away ere day.
The midwife having better skill
than had this new made mother,
Quoth she, surely some Fairy 't was,
for it can be no other.

And so the old wife rightly iudg'd,
for it was so indeed.

This

This Fairy shew'd himself most kind,
and helpt his love at need ;
For store of linnen he provides,
and brings her for her baby,
With dainty cates and choised fare,
he serv'd her like a Lady.

The Christening time then being [come,
most merry they [did pass ;
The Gossips dra[ined a cheerful cup
as then prov[ided was.
And Robin was [the infant call'd,
so named the [Gossips by :
What pranks [he played both day and night
I 'le tell you cer[tainly.

CHAPTER II.

Shewing how Robin Good-fellow carried himself,
and how he run away from his Mother.

WHILE yet he was a little lad
and of a tender age,
He us'd much waggish tricks to men,
as they at him would rage.

Unto

Unto his Mother they complain'd,
which grieved her to heare,
And for these Pranks she threatned him
he should have whipping cheare.

If that he did not leave his tricks,
his ieering mocks and mowes :
Quoth she, thou vile, untutor'd youth,
these Pranks no breeding shewes :
I cannot to the Market goe,
but ere I backe returne,
Thou scof'st my neighbours in such sort,
which makes my heart to mourne.

But I will make you to repent
these things ere I have done :
I will no favour have on thee,
although thou beest my sonne.
Robin was griev'd to heare these words,
which she to him did say,
But to prevent his punishment,
from her he run away.

And travelling long upon the way,
his hunger being great,
Unto a Taylor's house he came,
and did intreat some meat :

The

The Taylor tooke compassion then
upon this pretty youth,
And tooke him for his Prentice straight,
as I have heard in truth.

CHAPTER III.

How Robin Good-fellow left his Master, and also
how Oberon told him he should be turned into what
shape he could wish or desire.

Now Robin Good-fellow, being plac't
with a Taylor, as you heare,
He grew a workman in short space,
so well he ply'd his geare.
He had a gowne which must be made,
even with all haste and speed ;
The Maid must have 't against next day
to be her wedding weed.

The Taylor he did labour hard
till twelve a clock at night ;
Betweene him and his servant then
they finished aright
The gowne, but putting on the sleeves :
quoth he unto his man,
I'le goe to bed : whip on the sleeves
as fast as ere you can.

So

So Robin straightway takes the gowne
And hangs it on a pin,
Then takes the sleeves and whips the gowne;
till day he nere did lin.
His Master rising in the morne,
And seeing what he did,
Begun to chide; quoth Robin then,
I doe as I was bid.

His Master then the gowne did take
and to his worke did fall.
By that time he had done the same
the Maid for it did call.
Quoth he to Robin, goe thy wayes
and fetch the remnants hither,
That yesterday we left, said he,
wee'l breake our fasts together.

Then Robin hies him up the staires
and brings the remnants downe,
Which he did know his Master sav'd
out of the woman's gowne.
The Taylor he was vext at this,
he meant remnants of meat,
That this good woman, ere she went,
might there her breakfast eate.

Quoth

Quoth she this is a breakfast good
I tell you, friend, indeed ;
And to requite your love I will
send for some drinke with speed :
And Robin he must goe for it
with all the speed he may :
He takes the pot and money too,
and runnes from thence away.

When he had wandred all the day
a good way from the Towne,
Unto a forest then he came :
to sleepe he laid him downe.
Then Oberon came, with all his Elves,
and danc'd about his sonne,
With musick pleasing to the eare ;
and, when that it was done,

King Oberon layes a scroule by him,
that he might understand
Whose sonne he was, and how hee'd grant
whate'er he did demand :
To any forme that he did please
himselſe he would translate ;
And how one day hee'd send for him
to see his fairy State.

Then

THE MERRY PUCK,

Then Robin longs to know the truth
of this mysterious skill,
And turnes himselfe into what shape
he thinks upon or will.
Sometimes a neighing horse was he,
sometimes a gruntling hog,
Sometimes a bird, sometimes a crow,
sometimes a snarling dog.

CHAPTER IV.

How Robin Good-fellow was merry at the Bridehouse.

Now Robin having got this art,
he oft would make good sport,
And hearing of a wedding day,
he makes him ready for 't.
Most like a ioviall Fidler then
he drest himselfe most gay,
And goes unto the wedding house,
thereon his crowd to play.

He welcome was unto this feast,
and merry they were all;
He play'd and sung sweet songs all day,
at night to sports did fall.

He

He first did put the candles out,
and being in the dark,
Some would he strike & some would pinch,
and then sing like a lark.

The candles being light againe,
and things well and quiet,
A goodly posset was brought in
to mend their former diet ;
Then Robin for to have the same
did turne him to a Beare ;
Straight at that sight the people all
did run away for feare.

Then Robin did the posset eate,
and having serv'd them so,
Away goes Robin with all haste,
then laughing hoe, hoe, hoe !

CHAPTER V.

Declaring how Robin Good-fellow serv'd an old
lecherous man.

There was an old man had a Neece,
a very beauteous maid ;
To wicked lust her Unkle sought
this faire one to perswade.

But

But she a young man lov'd too deare
to give consent thereto ;
'T was Robin's chance upon a time
to heare their grievous woe :
Content your selfe, then Robin saies,
and I will ease your griefe,
I have found out an excellent way
that will yeeld you reliefe.

He sends them to be married straight,
and he, in her disguise,
Hies home withall the speed he may
to blind her Unkle's eyes :
And there he plyes his worke amaine,
doing more in one houre,
Such was his skill and workmanship,
than she could doe in foure.

The old man wondred for to see
the worke goe on so fast,
And there withall more worke doth he
unto good Robin cast.
Then Robin said to his old man,
good Unkle, if you please
To grant to me but one ten pound
I 'le yeeld your love-suit ease.

Ten pounds, quoth he, I will give thee,
sweet Neece, with all my heart,
So thou will grant to me thy love,
to ease my troubled heart.

Then let me a writing have, quoth he,
from your owne hand with speed,
That I may marry my sweet-heart
when I have done this deed.

The old man he did give consent
that he these things should have,
Thinking that it had bin his Neece
that did this bargaine crave ;
And unto Robin then quoth he,
my gentle N[eece, behold,
Goe thou into [thy chamber soone,
and I 'le goe [bring the gold.

When he into [the chamber came,
thinking in[deed to play,
Straight Robin [upon him doth fall,
and carries h[im away
Into the chamb[er where the two
faire Lovers [did abide,
And gives to th[em their Unkle old,
I, and the g[óld beside.

The

The old man [vainly Robin sought,
so man[y shapes he tries ;
Someti[m]es he was a hare or hound,
som[et]imes like bird he flies.
The [more he strove the less he sped,
Th[e] Lovers all did see ;
And [thus did Robin favour them
Full [kind and merrilie.

Thus Robin lived a merry life
as any could enjoy,
'Mong country farms he did resort
and oft would folks annoy :
But if the maids doe call to him,
he still away will goe
In knavish sort, and to himselfe
he 'd laugh out hoe, hoe, hoe !

He oft would beg and crave an almes,
but take nought that they 'd give ;
In severall shapes he 'd gull the world,
thus madly did he live.
Sometimes a cripple he would seeme,
sometimes a souldier brave :
Sometimes a fox, sometimes a hare ;
brave pastimes would he have.

Sometimes

Sometimes an owle he'd seeme to be,
sometimes a skipping frog;
Sometimes a kirne, in Irish shape,
to leape ore mire or bog:
Sometime he'd counterfeit a voyce,
and travellers call astray,
Sometimes a walking fire he'd be,
and lead them from their way.

Some call him Robin Good-fellow,
Hob goblin, or mad Crisp,
And some againe doe tearme him oft
by name of Will the Wispe;
But call him by what name you list,
I have studied on my pillow,
I think the best name he deserves
is Robin the Good Fellow.

At last upon a summer's night
King Oberon found him out,
And with his Elves in dancing wise
straight circled him about.
The Fairies danc't, and little Tom Thumb
on his bag-pipe did play,
And thus they danc't their fairy round
till almost break of day.

Then

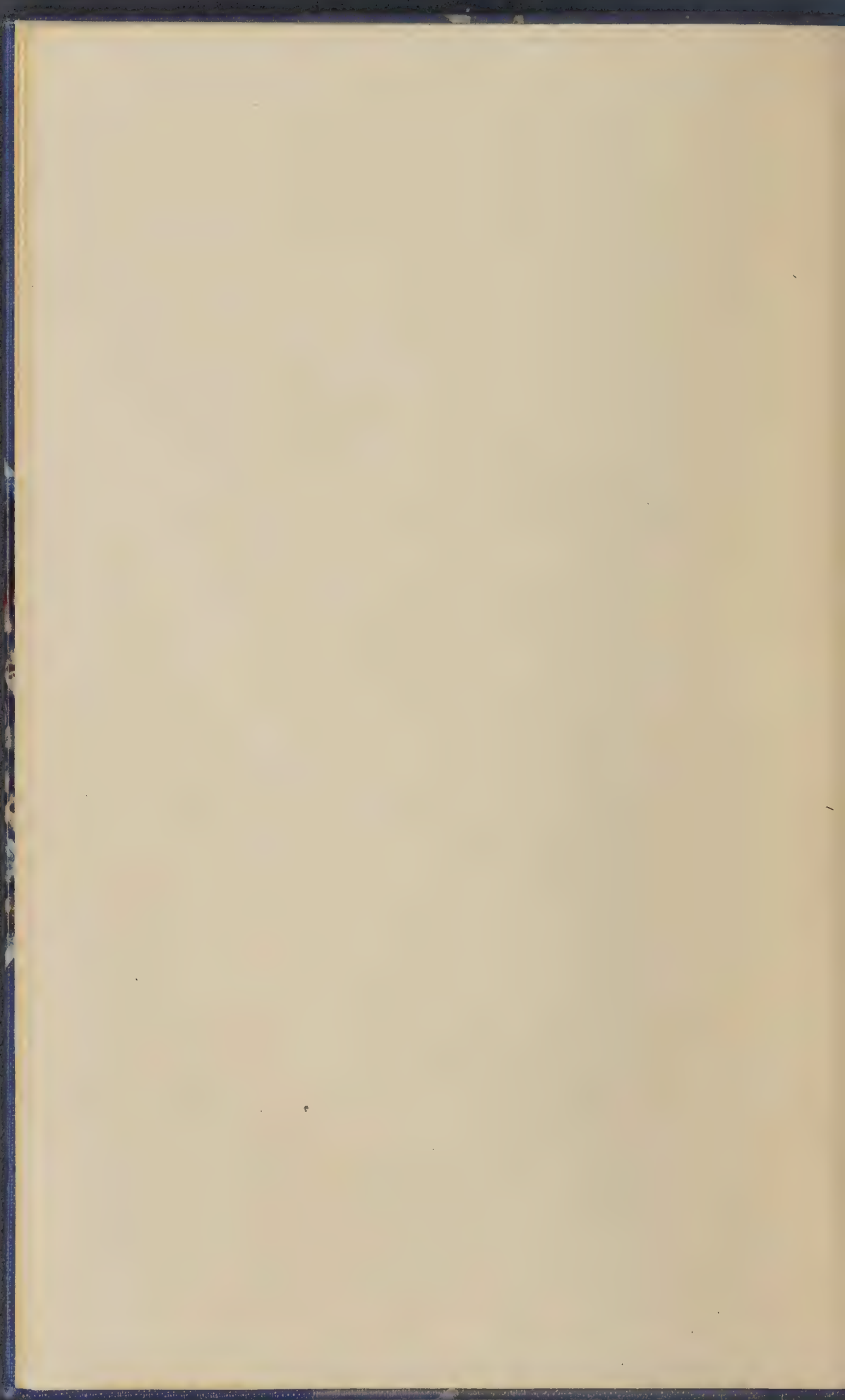
Then Phebus he most gloriously
begins to grace the aire,
When Oberon with his fairy traine
begins to make repaire,
With speed unto the Fairy land,
They swiftly tooke their way,
And I out of my dreame awak't,
and so 't was perfect day.

Thus having told my dreame at full
I 'le bid you all farewell.
If you applaud mad Robin's pranks,
may be ere long I 'le tell
Some other stories to your eares,
which shall contentment give :
To gaine your favours I will seeke
the longest day I live.

FINIS.

LONDON:

F. SHOBERL, JUN., 4, LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.



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